DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 196 846 SP 016 784

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TITLE Abstract of Research Performed by the Research Committee Since July 1978. Report No. 10.
INSTITUTION Nedlands Coll. of Advanced Education (Australia).
PUB DATE Feb 80
NOTE 33p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Discipline; Foreign Countries; Higher Education; Minority Group Children; Multicultural Education; Research Opportunities; *Research Projects; *Research Reports; Science Careers; Secondary Education; Student Attrition; *Teacher Education; Teacher Effectiveness; *Teaching Experience; *Teaching Load
IDENTIFIERS *Australia

ABSTRACT

Reports on all the research projects performed under the aegis of the Nedlands College Research Committee since July 1978 are presented in summary form. Abstracts on the following projects are offered: (1) Nedlands action project; (2) measurement of academic staff workloads; (3) measurement of student workloads; (4) causes of student withdrawals; (5) teaching of children of different cultural backgrounds; (6) survey of science graduates from Nedlands College; (7) seminar on discipline in secondary schools; (8) inquiry into good teaching; and (9) survey of research requirements of academic staff members. Brief annotations are given of reports still in preparation on the role of teaching practice, a pilot study on patterns of student stress, and a study of occupational skills and employment opportunities. (JD)

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REPORT NUMBER 10
DATE: February '80

ED196846

ABSTRACT OF RESEARCH PERFORMED BY THE RESEARCH COMMITTEE SINCE JULY '78

RESEARCH COMMITTEE

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NEDLANDS COLLEGE of Advanced Education

NEDLANDS COLLEGE

OF ADVANCED EDUCATION

ABSTRACT
OF RESEARCH PERFORMED BY
THE RESEARCH COMMITTEE
SINCE JULY 1978

REPORT No. 10

PREPARED BY:
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SPECIAL PROJECTS OFFICER

FEBRUARY, 1980

OCT 2 . 380

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TOPIC	PAGE NUMBER
Introduction	1
Nedlands Action Project Report	2
Academic Staff Workloads, Measurement of	6
Student Workloads, Measurement of	8
Student Withdrawals, Causes of: first survey	11
: follow-up survey	12
Teaching of Children of Different Cultural Backgrounds	14
Science Graduates from Nedlands College, Survey of	17
Discipline in Secondary Schools, Seminar	20
Good Teaching, Enquiry into	23
Research Requirements of Academic Staffmembers, Survey of	26

REPORTS IN PREPARATION

The Role of Teaching Practice: Supervision, Advice, Assessment	28
Pilot Study on Patterns of Student Stress	28
Study of Occupational Skills and Employment Opportunities	28

INTRODUCTION

The following pages present in summary form reports on all the research projects performed under the aegis of the Nedlands College Research Committee since July 1978.

This abstract records every research project in which the Committee has had a substantial involvement, or has carried out in its entirety. It does not include projects undertaken by members of the Committee working as individuals, or by individual members of College staff.

It is intended that the following pages will serve as an introduction to the research already completed by the College. However, an exercise of this kind must, of its very nature, suffer from the handicap of selectivity. It is hoped, therefore, that many readers will be stimulated to pursue points of interest by referring to the original reports.

NEDLANDS ACTION PROJECT REPORT
(Published as Report No. 1 of September 1978)

As the introduction to the Research Committee's report notes

"The NEDAP Scheme is a pilot scheme in teacher education within the Western Australian Secondary Teachers' College. It offers an integrated theory/practice programme in which the school experience and College programme are concurrent."

"Interview guides were prepared and administered to each of the target groups - the student teachers, the tutor teachers, the school principals, the College staff involved in NEDAP. This together with documentary and background information (provided) an extensive data base" (1.0).

Response of School Principals

The Principals of the two schools in which the NEDAP scheme operated indicated a personal commitment to teacher education and affirmed that NEDAP is an accepted teacher training programme in their schools (3.110).

Response of Student Teachers

All NEDAP students saw the scheme as providing the kind of teacher training best suited to their needs. Among the reported advantages were the gradual introduction to the teaching task; the balance of theory and practice; and the way in which attachment to a school enabled students to make immediate use of theory learned in College (3.131).

Response of Tutor Teachers

All the tutor teachers (N = 24) favoured NEDAP as a continuing programme and agreed that it was an adequate teacher education programme. It offered an education more related to teaching than the one they had experienced as student teachers. (The majority were teachers with five or more years' experience.) (3.120). Tutor teachers generally agreed that NEDAP provided an integration of theory and practice. (3.121).

Response of College Staff

The College staff strongly endorsed the principle of on-site training (3.140). College staff saw the NEDAP scheme as an alternative in that it (a) extended the range of programmes offered by the College and (b) provided opportunity for student choice (3.143).

Reservations Expressed About NEDAP

The reservations expressed by members of the above groups concerning the NEDAP scheme related to the following matters:

(i) Prior to 1977, the scheme offered far more to Diploma of Education students in terms of practical experience. From 1977, this advantage was diminished by the introduction of A.T.P. and the two four-week block practices. (3.151).

(ii) Student entry into the NEDAP scheme lacked restrictions.

(iii) Selection of tutor teachers was such that, in the view of College staff, persons could be appointed without regard to suitability or length of teaching experience.

(iv) The programme needed adequate monitoring by College staff with advisory visits early in the year.

(v) Supervision was seen by all College staff as a problem not exclusive to NEDAP. (3.152).

(vi) Administration difficulties were seen as a strong factor against the continuation of NEDAP by fourteen College staff members. They saw

Problems of organisation
Problems of appropriateness
Introduced problems (3.153).

The Cost of NEDAP

The presumed higher financial cost of the scheme in relation to either staff workload or time involvement, and actual payments to tutor teachers, was raised by ten members of College staff. (3.154). A financial analysis of the relative costs of the differing modes of practice was therefore included in the report. The analysis showed that, in 1978, the cost per student to the College of the NEDAP scheme was about six per cent above that of the 2 x 4 block practice. (3.310-3.430).

Main Recommendations of the Research Committee

On the basis of the NEDAP report, the Research Committee made a number of recommendations to Academic Council, among which were the following:

(i) NEDAP be accepted as an ongoing, alternative, teaching - practice commitment.

(ii) NEDAP be administered by the Department of Teaching Practice through a liaison officer appointed from the permanent staff.

(iii) The number of schools at which NEDAP is offered be increased.

(iv) Teachers be invited to apply for positions as tutor-teachers in NEDAP before students are selected for the scheme.

(v) Tutor-teachers and students be selected for the Programme according to clearly defined educational criteria.

(vi) Appropriate pre-practice experience be provided for students before they commence their extended period of in-school experience.

(vii) Students participating in NEDAP receive advice and visits from College staff early in their in-school experience. (6.0).

The Research Committee concluded that

"... NEDAP is an attractive and educationally sound approach to providing in-school experience, worth extending beyond its present narrow range. Costs of the programme are only slightly greater than costs of other teaching practice programmes . . . Improvements in its present organisation are desirable and feasible and should be implemented...."

MEASUREMENT OF ACADEMIC STAFF WORKLOADS
(In publication as Report No. 6 of February, 1979)

This project attempted to measure the workloads of full-time members of academic staff in 1978. A pro-forma was designd in which provision was made for each staff-member to detail his weekly contact hours, the type of contact (lecture, tutorial etc.), the number of students in each class and the number of weeks during the semester in which a particular course was running. Provision was also made for the staff member to make a subjective estimate of the number of hours of preparation necessary prior to each period of class contact.

These forms were completed and returned by individual staff members. The Dean of Studies and the Special Projects Officer then aggregated and transferred this data onto Departmental summary sheets. No attempt was made to incorporate the estimates of preparation time because of the incompleteness of the data and because of its subjectiveness.

Using a calculation of the number of equivalent full-time staff in each department, the following information was calculated for each department in semesters one and two, 1978:

Average lecturer's contact hours per week.
Average lecturer's student contact hours per week.
Total student credit hours per semester.
Ratio of student credit hours to number of equivalent full-time staff members.

The most important findings were that lecturers had an average of 13.59 hours of class contact per week throughout the teaching year and an average of 228 student hours.

There were variations in these figures between departments. The concept of student-hours (the number of students in the group multiplied by the number of hours of contact each week) was introduced as an alternative measure of workloads in recognition of the fact

that some lecturers with a comparatively low number of contact hours had very large classes, necessitating heavy loads in terms of marking and supervision/advice. Perhaps not surprisingly, departments with the lowest contact hours figures per staff member tended to show the highest student-hours figures per staff member.

Notwithstanding the use of student-hours as a measure of workloads, no figures for marking, preparation, advice, administration or practice supervision as such were incorporated into this study. Estimates of these important components of the workload were not attempted because they virtually defy quantification. Consequently no claim was made that this research scheme (or, indeed, any other schema that could have been devised) supplied a complete measure of the workloads of members of academic staff, nor that it was an accurate indication of the relative workloads of departments.

MEASUREMENT OF STUDENT WORKLOADS
(In publication as Report No. 5 of December, 1978)

The object of this study was to measure the workloads of full-time diploma of teaching students in the College, in response to representations made by groups and individuals, and to isolate the factors which had a particular bearing on the size of the workload.

The research schema embodied two approaches: firstly, a Special Projects Officer attended a meeting of the Student Representative Council in order to hear the Council's position on workloads at first hand; a written statement was subsequently received from this body. (pp 2-3). The second approach consisted of an attempt to interview a sample of diploma of teaching students on the subject of their personal academic workloads.

Forty students were selected from four departments, using stratification by year of course and random sampling within the strata. The comparatively low figure of 28 of these students responded to letters requesting their co-operation in the survey: time did not permit the drawing of a further sample replacing those who did not attend. (p.4)

Each of the students participating was interviewed using a pro-forma in which weekly contact hours were recorded. Also recorded were the number of major and minor assignments, tutorial preparations, camps, etc. that the student had been required to complete during the semester. The student was asked to estimate the number of hours occupied in performing each of these tasks. Qualitative remarks on the workloads question were also invited and recorded. (pp.5-7).

Using the data relating to the number of assignments and the estimated time taken for each type of commitment, a total figure for study hours for the semester was calculated and then divided by the number of weeks in the semester to give an average weekly figure. This study hours

figure was then added to the contact hours to give each student's average weekly workload. His/her estimated weekly travelling time was also recorded, but not included in the total workloads figure (p.9)

The weekly workload of the average student in the sample was estimated to be 39.02 hours (study plus contact). Average weekly travelling time was calculated as 6.43 hours. The workloads figure did not substantiate claims that students suffered from excessive workloads, but the report advanced reasons which could indicate that the figure was an underestimate. The most notable consideration was that the sample of students had been required to estimate from memory both the number of assignments set and the hours of work involved in completing them. However, even if the figure were an under-estimate by 20 per cent, the resultant average workload would have been by no means unmanageable. (pp 11-12).

Of greater concern however, was the wide variations in individual workloads. The arithmetic mean is a statistic that has here concealed very large fluctuations of from less than 28 to more than 50 hours per week. This was an obvious inequity and meant that some students certainly did have a heavy workload.

Analysis of variance failed to indicate any significant difference in workloads between subject departments or between years of the course.

A summary of the conclusions and recommendations of this report is as follows:-

A minority of students interviewed considered workloads in toto to be too heavy.

The size of the <u>average</u> workload, even if an under-estimate, appeared reasonable, but the existence of individual workloads greatly above and below the mean, represented an apparent inequity that deserved to be remedied.

The proposition that the College should bring back examinations in order to have fewer assignments received no support. However, many respondents had numerous strictures to make concerning the setting, spacing, administration and marking of assignments and their suggestions for amelioration occur as items (a) to (f) on page 13 of the report.

A recurrent theme was that workloads of minor teaching fields and/or electives were "excessive" in relation to major teaching field obligations.

The need to take outside employment in response to financial problems tended to exacerbate a workloads problem for some respondents but the Research Committee took the view that on no account could the College reduce its contact or study requirements with the intention of accommodating students in this situation. Nevertheless, the Committee recognised the existence of grave financial problems in sections of the student community and has drawn attention to this issue in several of its reports. (pp 13-14)

TWO SURVEYS OF THE CAUSES OF STUDENT WITHDRAWALS

(In publication as Reports Nos. 3 and 4)

First Survey (report dated 6 October 1978)

This survey was directed towards all 183 students in all courses who voluntarily withdrew from College between 1 January and 31 May 1978.

Some 102 of these students had completed the questionnaire on the withdrawal form or alternatively written letters giving reasons for their decision. A survey was made of these students' files and the reasons they gave were collated. The most important explanations to emerge from this source were as follows:

Undertaking Other Courses Inside W.A.	22.5 per cent of respondents
Financial Problems	16.7 per cent
Heavy Workload of Employment/ Non Nedlands Studies (P.3)	12.8 per cent

(In the questionnaires used in these surveys, respondents were free to nominate more than one reason. Consequently, total responses always summed to more than 100 per cent.)

The remaining 81 students, not having left reasons on their files, became the target of a postal survey. After one or sometimes two letters, 60 members of this group completed and returned a new questionnaire. Since this questionnaire contained a far larger set of alternative responses than that attached to the withdrawal form, and since confidentiality was assured, the committee was not surprised to obtain quite different results to those of the file survey. The three most important reasons stated were as follows.

Financial Problems	36.7 per cent of respondents
Found Course Disappointing	31.7 per cent

Uncertain Employment Prospects in this field. (p.5)	30.0 per cent

Follow-Up Survey (report dated 22 December 1978)

Because of the marked differences between the results of the file survey and the first postal survey, the Committee hypothesised that the remarks left on student files were not an adequate indicator of the reasons for withdrawal of that segment of the population.

In order to test this hypothesis, a second postal survey was mounted, with students who left reasons on their files as the target population. The same questionnaire and covering letter used in the first postal survey were employed.

After one, and sometimes two, letters had been sent, a total of 81 out of a population of 102 people had responded. As predicted, this group contradicted itself by offering a quite differently ordered set of reasons for withdrawing compared to the reasons it had left on student files. The three main reasons were as follows:

Workload of Employment/ Other Studies Too Heavy	33.3 per cent of respondents
Found Course Disappointing	30.9 per cent
Financial Problems (P.3)	28.4 per cent

The postal survey was accepted as the more valid index of the reasons for withdrawal, by virtue of its confidentiality and provision of a more extensive questionnaire form. Consequently, it was decided to amalgamate the results of the two postal surveys in order to form a composite picture of the reasons for withdrawal of the entire population. The overall response rate was 77.1 percent of the 183 voluntary withdrawals. The main reasons which emerged were as follows:

Financial Problems	31.9 per cent
Found Course Disappointing	31.2 per cent
Workload of Employment/ Other Studies Too Heavy	26.2 per cent
Uncertain Employment Prospects in this Field	25.5 per cent
Family/Domestic Problems	22.0 per cent

(p.6)

The second postal survey also elicited many qualitative comments and these are recorded in some detail in the report. (pp 6-10)

A summary of the conclusions and recommendations of the report is as follows:

Although some ex students may have cited 'financial problems' when their primary reason for withdrawal was lack of motivation, the financial plight of many of our students is grave. This fact has been noted in other work done by the Research Committee.

Complaints made about specific courses were discreetly drawn to the attention of the relevant heads of department on a confidential basis.

The issue of workloads was examined in a separate report of the Research Committee. That report also contained suggestions from several sources as to how students financial problems might be ameliorated.

Most of the other reasons for withdrawal cited by the respondents were substantially outside the College's power to control.

The Research Committee suggested that the College's withdrawal form be improved by the provision of a greater choice of possible reasons for withdrawal, in order that this facility might be a better indicator in the future. The suggestion was adopted and an improved withdrawal form came into use in 1979.
(pp10-11)

TEACHER EDUCATION AND THE TEACHING OF CHILDREN OF DIFFERENT CULTURAL BACKGROUNDS

(In publication as Report No. 7 of October, 1979)

As the introduction to the report observes
" . . . . the overall increase in the number of students being retained in school at all levels of secondary education has resulted in a growing number of children of Aboriginal/Part Aboriginal and/or migrant parents in the secondary streams."

The main object of the enquiry was to determine the extent to which the College programme adequately met the needs of beginning teachers in relation to such children.

The nature of the "cultural differences" was identified as -
- Aboriginal/Part Aboriginal
- Migrant from non-English speaking countries
- Migrant from English speaking countries.

The survey was directed to all teachers who graduated with a diploma in teaching from W.A. Secondary Teachers' (Nedlands) College in 1976 and 1977 and who had subsequently completed at least one year of teaching.

A questionnaire with accompanying letter was sent to 390 teachers in the above population. Forty were returned unclaimed; 120 teachers responded. All geographical regions of the state were represented in this sample, with non-metropolitan teachers slightly outnumbering metropolitan respondents. Approximately two-thirds of the sample had more than one year's but less than two years' teaching experience. (p.4) Graduates from all major teaching fields were represented (p.5). The median teaching load was between 26-30 periods per week, while the median size of classes actually taught was around 26 pupils (P.6).

Out of the 120 respondents, only 5 indicated that they had no classroom contact with students of either aboriginal or migrant background.

Specifically, 98 teachers had contact with aboriginals, 88 with non-English migrants and 94 with English-speaking migrants. (P.7)

The questionnaire then probed the issues of the status of pupils of different cultural backgrounds in Australian schools and the adequacy of the College's courses as a preparation for teaching these children. Sixty per cent of respondents thought such pupils were disadvantaged whilst 25 per cent believed they were not disadvantaged. Nineteen per cent of all respondents considered that their College education was an adequate preparation for teaching children of different cultural backgrounds, sixty nine per cent did not regard their preparation as adequate.

Finally, 63 per cent of respondents were willing to participate in a follow-up survey, 27 per cent were not willing. (p.9)

However, because of the large amount of data collected and the many qualitative statements made in the current survey, the report questioned whether the need for a follow-up survey remained.

In summary, the results of this survey indicated that a substantial number of beginning teachers may have classes which include minority-group children. The respondents "saw" Aboriginal students as more disadvantaged than migrant students. For the former group, difficulties were seen to arise mainly from the school system and home background; for the latter group, difficulties appeared to arise more from language differences and social influences.

Most of the respondents reported having had little awareness of the needs and difficulties of minority-group children prior to their first teaching appointments. The teachers suggested that the College could better meet such needs by

(a) introducing special units of study;
(b) greater emphasis on practical involvement during training; and
(c) direct experience through contact with Aboriginal and migrant lecturers, and community groups.

There were indications that beginning teachers believed they would have benefited from education in the use of special techniques to overcome learning difficulties; in the awareness of cultural differences; and in the manner in which language shapes thinking and influences the grasp of a second language.

The report noted that some of the respondents are located in isolated regional clusters and suggested that the College consider providing them with special assistance in the form of inservice programmes or external studies.

SURVEY OF SCIENCE GRADUATES FROM NEDLANDS COLLEGE

(Published as Report No. 2 of April, 1979)

The introduction to the report notes that " . . . The general purpose of this survey was to determine to what extent the needs of first year science teachers had been met by their pre-service programme, the Diploma of Teaching at Nedlands College. . . "

The enquiry was commenced by writing to the Education Department the Principals of the relevant schools and the new teachers themselves, requesting co-operation in the survey. As a result, it was possible to interview all sixteen teachers in the target population, either at school or at the College. (1.0)

A Questionnaire, partly structured and partly unstructured, was prepared by a Special Projects officer in consultation with the Head of the Science Department and staff members of the Department. The interviews were carried out by a Research Investigator especially appointed for the task.

All respondents were found to be teaching in their major teaching area of science, three had classes within their minor teaching area and two had classes outside both their major and minor fields. Lower school science classes accounted for 78 per cent of the total teaching duties and upper school science classes accounted for 11 per cent. (3.1)

Respondents were asked to rank their knowledge, equipment and teaching skills in the lower school according to five subject areas: biology, chemistry, physics, geology and astronomy. The possible ratings were excellent, good, fair, poor, very poor, cannot say.

More than half the "votes" cast on the five subject areas rated knowledge as good or excellent. More than half the "votes" rated equipment skills as fair, good or excellent. More than half the "votes" rated teaching skills also as fair, good or excellent. (4.1, table 2).

Fourteen of the sixteen subjects agreed that Science Department philosophy should emphasise breadth of science as opposed to depth, while all agreed that teaching method should be integrated with content units and that the emphasis on practical teaching methods was preferable to theoretical frameworks. (4.2)

"With regard to the relative time spent on educational studies, methodology, content and electives, fourteen subjects registered dissatisfaction claiming, in most cases, that more time should be spent on methodology and content, and less time should be allocated to educational studies and electives." (4.3)

Ten respondents claimed that the duration of the school practice experience should be increased. Suggestions were made for an additional eight weeks in third year, for an eight week session in second year, and for a practice, prior to the final practice, which was not assessed. The integration of school practice experience with the science methodology programme was sufficient for six of the respondents. The remainder advocated more interaction with NCAE staff with regard to teaching problems and evaluations and closer matching of specific methodology topics with the timing of the school practice experience (4.4)

With regard to the adequacy of preparation in their non-specialist field of science, half the biology specialists felt that they had not received enough physics and chemistry content to cope with lower school science. Just under half the physics/chemistry specialists perceived an inadequacy in their biology preparation. (4.5)

Eleven subjects stated that items in science method units were treated too briefly and provided suggestions for expansion. About half the respondents thought the division of time between upper and lower school curricula needed correction; but this group was about evenly divided between those wanting extra time for the L.S.S. Programme and those wanting extra time for the upper school curricula. (4.6)

Thirteen of the sixteen respondents rated the status of the Diploma of Teaching as fair or good and thirteen saw their promotional prospects as fair or good when equipped with the bachelor of Education award. With regard to the status of the Bachelor of Education degree, fifteen of the respondents favoured a post-experience degree as opposed to a pre-service degree. (4.7)

A large number of recommendations were made in the report. Among those which had College-wide applicability were the following:

- Less time be spent on electives and educational studies and correspondingly more time be allocated to the methodology and content areas.
- The duration of the school practice experience should be increased in the second and third years of the teacher education programme and a greater variety of experience be provided.
- The Teaching Practice and science methodology programmes be more integrated.
- The Bachelor of Education degree be conceived as a post experience qualification.

The report concluded that beginning teachers tended to perceive the deficits in their knowledge of content and methodology as "the almost exclusive responsibility of others, in the sense that some "*others*" should provide for all their needs." Their judgements seemed more closely linked to the educational experience of their third, rather than any other, year. They were well aware that some course problems arose mainly from institutional constraints, but were concerned about the lack of a transitional internship between their education and their work.

DISCIPLINE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS
(Publication as Report No. 8 of October, 1979)

This project was designed to meet the E.R.D.C. criterion of *"what's happening in the classroom,"* and consequently had particular relevance to the College's research programme. The College also had an interest stemming from the relevance of 'discipline' to its training programmes and its commitment to in-service/post-service courses. (p.1)

The project took the form of a two-day seminar held in September 1979 which was attended by representatives from the College and from government and private schools.

The programme objectives were as follows:-

- to construct a practical framework for considering *"discipline"* in the language of the class-room teacher.
- to consider specific discipline problems i.e. case studies.
- to examine the direction of some recent research in the area of discipline.
- to seek ways of offering teachers in-service programmes that meet their needs in this area.
- to identify some of the strategies by which beginning teachers may acquire the social skills and actions of the experienced teacher.
- to offer follow-up service to participants who request it. (p.2)

At the commencement of the seminar, participants were asked to commit to writing the issues they believed should be raised in an exploration of the discipline theme. Twenty-nine statements were made. Participants were asked to pick their first six priority statements from the twenty-nine statements and to rank them.

Discussion then ensued as to how to assemble the chosen statements into the most appropriate groups. The various issues were classified under the following group headings:

A. Definition
B. Curriculum
C. Administration
D. Classroom
E. Student-teacher interaction
F. Personal philosophy (pp 7-9)

Three kinds of comment emerged concerning the teacher's responsibility for behaviour problems. The first was that teachers should have a personal philosophy of teaching so that they can maintain direction. Given firm guide-lines, student direction and adequate lesson preparation there are no problems of discipline. The second comment was that there is a distinction between "ordinary" versus "out of the ordinary" problems in the classroom. Ordinary problems are teacher-induced. Thirdly, the classroom environment generates friction through such factors as noise, movement, use of time, personal interaction, etc. These disturbances are not seen as discipline problems, but as part of "life" in schools. (pp.10-11)

Administrative constraints included the views of other school staff as to what was proper conduct in the classroom. Also the "Presence" of the class next door and the class to come acts as a deterrent to making changes in the physical room arrangements. Finally, the "all rooms for all people" dilemma creates classrooms of nomad students. (p.12)

The definition of discipline was seen as a process which emphasises the structuring of the school in such a way as to foster orderly functioning for all members, who are subject to a control factor relating to the teacher, the environment, curriculum, and method. (p.13)

"A case-study approach was used to explore the classroom problems experienced by the participants ... An attempt was made to assess problem situations by identifying ways in which "disciplinary" measures . . . previously employed (were) adequate/inadequate." (P.13-14)

One of the recommendations of the report was that a support service (independent of the school and the Education Department) be provided to individual teachers who requested it. This need was expressed by several teachers present. Participants also indicated a willingness to contribute to College pre-service programmes by way of attending regular seminars at College; by the development of an "observation practice" period as distinct from "teaching practice"; and by sharing in a panel that could (with the Practice Department) look at the classroom control skills used by experienced teachers. (pp.14-15)

The report concluded by querying the value of such descriptive categories as "out of the ordinary" problems as adding little to the understanding of the question of discipline. (pp.15.16)

ENQUIRY INTO GOOD TEACHING
(In publication as Report No. 7 of February, 1979)

The survey looked at the role of the Teachers' College in Teacher-Education as perceived by 54 members of College Staff. Among the objectives of the enquiry was the aim of establishing the specific knowledge, attitudes and skills that should, in the staff's view, be mastered by students graduating as teachers from the College.

A search of the literature failed to reveal any agreed set of specific expectancies held by educationists concerning the attributes of a good teacher. Nevertheless, there was found to be general agreement that an effective teacher is one who possesses professional skills related to teaching; possesses certain essential knowledge; possesses certain personal qualities; and possesses skills in inter-personal relationships. (pp.2-3)

For the College's study, 65 positive statements concerning the outcomes of teacher education for a graduate of this College were devised, and prepared as a set of cards. Each card contained a single statement. The 54 respondents were interviewed either individually or in small groups and were invited to sort the cards according to their personal judgement from the least to the most important and rate each of the statements along a seven point scale.

A detailed table of results was compiled, showing rank, mean and standard deviation of each of the 65 statements in the survey. The results indicated general agreement among the respondents as to the importance of the "in classroom" behaviour of the beginning teacher and that one of the prime functions of the College is to provide necessary 'survival' skills.

There was a heavy classroom emphasis on the first ten items selected by the respondents: motivation; clear instructions; teach a lesson; appropriate level; control; individual differences; enthusiasm; variety of methods; consistent behaviour; plan and sequence of lessons. (pp 4, 6-9)

It was possible to separate four themes affecting individual responses:

1. Role of the College

   "The items with the highest rankings in the survey relate to the characteristics seen as most needed by the beginning teacher. These may not be the same as the most desirable characteristics of a teacher per se." nearly one-third of the respondents identified fourteen items as not being primarily the responsibility of the College.

2. Obscurity of items

   Respondents named five items whose wording caused confusion.

3. Difference of opinion

   With regard to some items related to professional/personal attributes, responses tended to cluster at both ends of the seven point scale. There were noticeable differences of opinion as to whether matters of individual choice or conscience had a bearing on a person's suitability as a teacher.

4. Interpretation of the task

   The ranking of items was a task performed by differing methods, depending on the individual's conception. *"... staff members variously described (their) method (of ranking) as hierarchical, survival, categorical or intuitive".*

The constraints associated with having to rank each item according to a seven point scale were recognised by the report as creating their own sources of error. (p.5)

"Participants in this study were placed in a double dilemma: that of trying to respond to the urgent needs of the final year student about to graduate while at the same time view the overall objectives of a teacher education programme extending over a three year period . . . and that of distinguishing which of these skills are those

for which the College has the responsibility to prepare students and which the College has little or no control."

The report identifies the study as lacking precision in a number of areas:

(a) differentiation of the different stages in the teacher education programme;

(b) the number of survey items;

(c) the selection of items used;

(d) the balance of items within categories;

(e) the level of generality of items;

(f) the role of the College.
(pp. 13-17)

The report concluded that although the study had added little to the stock of knowledge concerning teacher education, it had given staff members a forum on which to express personal views and it also raised issues pertinent to the National Enquiry into Teacher Education.

A systematic follow up of this study, possibly using the Delphi technique, could be used to formulate a statement about good teaching.

An extension to this study could be mounted in order to incorporate the views of current students, recent graduates and experienced teachers.
(p.17)

SURVEY OF RESEARCH

REQUIREMENTS OF ACADEMIC

STAFFMEMBERS

(In publication as Report No. 9 November, 1979)

The object of the project was firstly, to acquaint all members of academic staff with the research proposals currently adopted by the Research Committee; secondly, to establish the perceived research needs of individual members of staff; thirdly, to give all staff members the opportunity to "vote" for those proposals which they deemed worthy of adoption; and fourthly, by these means to put up to Academic Council a folio of suggested research topics which truly reflected the requirements of the staff.

All members of academic staff were sent a letter requesting their participation in the survey. There were two attachments, namely a list of all research topics adopted in 1979 and a form which listed three new research proposals and left space for the individual lecturer to nominate his own topics.

Twenty three staff members (or groups of staff members) suggested a total of 29 topics. All the proposals were listed in a form which was submitted to each staff member accompanied by a request that she/he indicate his preferences with a tick and return the form, together with comments, if any. (p.1)

Fifty staff members submitted a "vote". The three most popular topics were as follows:

- Efficiency of courses at Nedlands College in terms of the adequacy of their teacher education preparation (i.e. how do ex-students rate their preparation after six months of teaching?)
- Survey of former students of the Bachelor of Education Course (N.C.A.E.) for the purpose of determining the perceived value of the course.

- Investigation of the reliability of teaching practice assessment registered on a five point scale by many different people in many different situations. Whether or not practice can be fairly assessed on so comparatively fine a scale given these differences.

The report lists seven other topics which attracted strong support. (pp. 2-3)

It was clear from both the quantitative results (in terms of "votes" cast) and from the accompanying written comments that "... many staff members attach great importance to appraising the efficiency of our courses as a whole and think this should be performed thoroughly before researching topics which are specific to one department or topics which concentrate on the problems of the school as such." (pp.3-4)

The report notes that some of the research proposals have already been partially covered by projects already adopted by the committee; for example, teaching practice was the subject of separate enquiries in 1978 and 1979. The report also indicates that most of the research undertaken since July 1978 has dealt with the assessment of aspects of N.C.A.E. courses. (p.5)

REPORTS IN PREPARATION

The Role of Teaching Practice: Supervision, Advice and Assessment.

This study takes the main stream of College practice arrangements and uses the Delphi Technique to develop a consensus view within teaching departments in an attempt to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the present system as perceived by staff members.

Two teaching departments are being surveyed currently.

Pilot Study on Patterns of Student Stress.

A general Profile of 233 first year students in the Diploma of Teaching was obtained and the perception of these students concerning their College experience was sought. The study addresses itself to such questions as:
"What is the relationship between the presence of 'potential' sources of stress and the student's experience of satisfaction/ achievement at College?"

Study of Occupational Skills and Employment Opportunities.

The objective of this study is to relate the skills possessed by diplomates of this College with suitable occupations in fields other than teaching, library and recreation work. The study commences by presenting employment forecasts in these three occupations. A list of alternative occupations, matched against suitable College courses, is provided, together with an employment outlook, where it is available.

The study presents extracts from two separate surveys of employers' opinions of the quality of the preparation given by the education system. The extracts focus on how employers view College diplomates as distinct from persons with university degrees or those who have attained other levels of education.

Finally, the report presents data showing how diplomates fare career-wise in comparison to persons with other qualifications in an organisation employing large numbers of qualified staff.